

News Release

December 29, 2003

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The Delaware State Fire Marshal wants to remind all Delaware property owners of the **False Fire Alarm Law** that takes effect on **January 1, 2004**. An owner or occupant of a property within the State of Delaware that falsely activates the building/home fire alarm system more than three times in one year will be held responsible and fined.

In an effort to reduce thousands of false fire alarms throughout the State, a major task was undertaken by a committee of fire service representatives, alarm company officials, the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association, and the State Fire Marshal's Office. A bill was drafted and passed in Dover to institute a penalty system for those property owners that do not properly maintain their fire alarm systems.

State Fire Marshal Willard F. Preston III states that this Law will drastically lower the number of false alarms that the Delaware fire service responds to per year. In addition, Marvin C. Sharp, president of the DE Volunteer Firemen's Association, states that reducing the false alarms will allow the fire service to limit the number of times firefighters are forced to leave their homes and rush to a fire call which is a direct result of a faulty alarm system.

Law enforcement officers from the State Fire Marshal's Office will enforce this new law. Once a property is identified as a nuisance, officers will issue the owner of the property a civil penalty. Civil penalties for faulty fire alarm systems will start at \$100.00 and progress upward for repeated offenses.

Anyone wishing a copy of the law may visit the Delaware State Fire Marshal's website www.delawarestatefiremarshal.com or stop by one of the State Fire Marshal's division offices.

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